

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 IO-14 CIAE-00 DODE-00
NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-05 H-02
INR-10 L-03 PA-02 SP-02 SS-15 HA-05 OMB-01
TRSE-00 SCS-06 CA-01 CG-00 DOTE-00 OC-06 CCO-00
SY-05 /097 W

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FM AMCONSUL TIJUANA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2312

AMEMBASSY MEXICO IMMEDIATE

UNCLAS TIJUANA 0135

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: CASC: ASSISTANCE TO CITIZENS

SUBJ: STORM DAMAGE IN BAJA CALIFORNIA

1. MUNICIPALITIES OF ENSENADA AND TIJUANA HAVE SUFFERED SEVERE DAMAGE CAUSED BY HEAVY RAINS DURING THIS WEEK AND FURTHER RAIN EXPECTED OVER WEEKEND OF MARCH 4 AND 5. TO DATE, THERE HAVE BEEN NO REPORTS OF AMERICAN CITIZENS IN DISTRESS IN OUR CONSULAR DISTRICT. THERE ARE, HOWEVER, ABOUT 10,000 LOW INCOME AND NO-INCOME MEXICANS WHOSE SQUATTER HOMES HAVE BEEN AFFECTED. THESE FAMILIES BEING EVACUATED FROM AFFECTED AREAS BY MEXICAN MILITARY WHICH HAS WORKED AROUND THE CLOCK. MOST DAMAGE HAS OCCURRED IN LOWLANDS AND HILLY AREAS WHERE SQUATTERS HAVE BEEN SETTLED FOR SEVERAL YEARS, IN SPITE OF WARNINGS BY MEXICAN AUTHORITIES THAT DURING HEAVY RAINS, THEIR HOMES ARE IN PATH OF WATER AND MUD FLOWS. MOST HOMELESS PERSONS BEING TRANSFERRED TO TEMPORARY QUARTERS PROVIDED BY MILITARY AND OTHER GOVERNMENT AGENCIES. WHEN RAINS CEASE AND WATERS RECEDE, AFFECTED PERSONS WILL BE RETURNED TO THEIR HOMES OR RELOCATED IN SAFER AREAS.

2. THERE ARE AN ESTIMATED 150 VEHICLES, INCLUDING SEVERAL BUSES, STRANDED SOUTH OF ENSENADA. MEXICAN STATE TOURIST OFFICE REPORTS UNCLASSIFIED

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NO RPT NO U.S. CITIZENS INVOLVED THUS FAR. DUE TO EXTENSIVE PUBLICITY IN U.S. CONCERNING CONTINUOUS STORMS IN THIS AREA SINCE DECEMBER, U.S. TOURIST TRAVEL BY CAR IN BAJA CALIFORNIA PENINSULA HAS BEEN MINIMAL.

3. SAN DIEGO RED CROSS HAS ESTABLISHED VOLUNTARY DRIVE TO GATHER BLANKETS, TENTS AND FOOD FOR TIJUANA FAMILIES IN DISTRESS. STORMS

HAVE CAUSED 10 MEXICAN DEATHS, INCLUDING TWO IN LATEST STORM ON MARCH 2, 1978. CURRENT MATERIAL DAMAGE TO ROADS AND STREETS ESTIMATED AT 10 MILLION DOLLARS. POOR ROAD CONDITIONS HAVE SERIOUSLY HAMPERED TRANSPORTATION, PARTICULARLY IN URBAN AREAS OF LARGER CITIES IN BAJA CALIFORNIA.

4. AS RESULT OF GOVERNOR DE LA MADRID'S REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE, THREE U.S. COAST GUARD HELICOPTERS ARE HELPING WITH REMOVAL OF FAMILIES FROM ISOLATED AREAS NEAR ENSENADA. MEXICAN HIGHWAY POLICE AND TOURIST OFFICE REPORT THAT TIJUANA/MEXICALI ROAD OPEN BUT IN PLACES HAS ONLY ONE LANE; TIJUANA/ENSENADA TOLL ROAD OPEN; ENSENADA/LA PAZ HIGHWAY BLOCKED IN FOUR PLACES.

5. ALTHOUGH WE HAVE NO REPORTS OF AMERICAN CITIZENS REQUIRING ASSISTANCE, CONGEN IN CLOSE CONTACT WITH MEXICAN TOURIST OFFICE AND OTHER LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND WILL RENDER ASSISTANCE AS REQUIRED. CONGEN DUTY OFFICER, MILDRED MEISOL, MAY BE CONTACTED IN EMERGENCY THROUGH TIJUANA TELEPHONE MESSAGE SERVICE (SERCONTEL), TELEPHONE NUMBER 903 385-0301 RPT 903 385-0301.

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